

The WHY

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Lesson Plans, Tools, Training & More Resources



Most people can drive a car ...

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1. Grab a pen
2. Blank piece of paper
3. Listen to instructions



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2 TYPES of Retrieval Practice

- A. Storage strength = entrenched
- B. Retrieval strength = activation

Robert & Elizabeth Bjork (1992)






Scan QR for RESOURCES

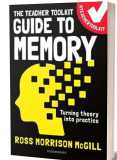
YOU WILL NEED:
 1. Mobile phone
 2. Pen or pencil

Download:
bit.ly/CPDpack



The research ... @TeacherToolkit
Customised, Quality Teacher Training & CPD Resources

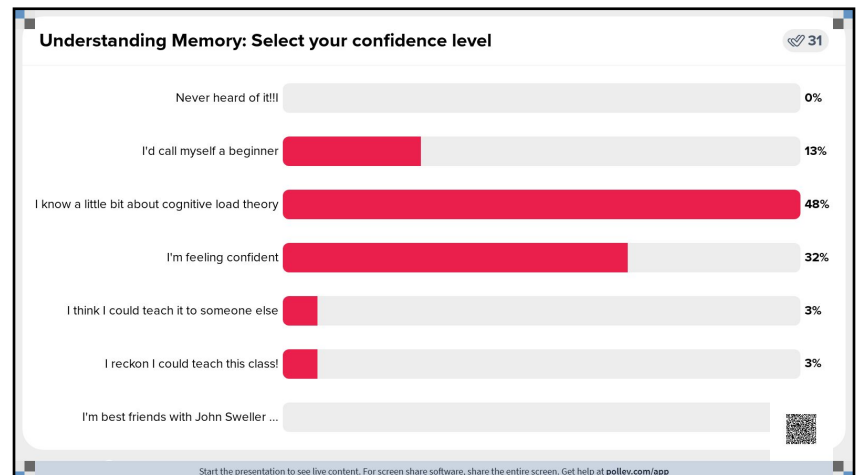
1. Rate their teacher training history with cognitive science ...
2. How confident do you feel in your own practice?
3. Which aspects of this field do you find challenging?




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Scan QR for surveys..

or visit
PollEV.com/TeacherToolkit





End of surveys

When poll is active, respond at pollev.com/teachertoolkit

What areas of cognitive science did your ITT cover?

- Parts of the brain
- How memory is shaped
- Types of memory
- Emotional learning
- Cognitive load theory
- Mental models for learning
- Brain plasticity
- Cognitive apprenticeship
- Wellbeing and links to cognition
- In-school cognitive science CPD
- None!

To  0

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End of surveys

When poll is active, respond at pollev.com/teachertoolkit

What areas of cog. sci. do you find challenging?

- Access to cog. sci.
- Time to implement ideas
- Understanding the research
- Wellbeing E.g. happy brain, happy learning
- Pupil mental health E.g. SEND
- Implementing cog. sci into the curriculum
- Research-led practice - getting others on board
- Cognitive CPD for me!
- Getting school leaders on board
- Costs associated with training
- None!

To  0

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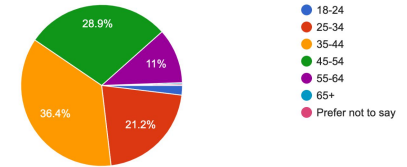
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End of surveys

Research Sample (to date)

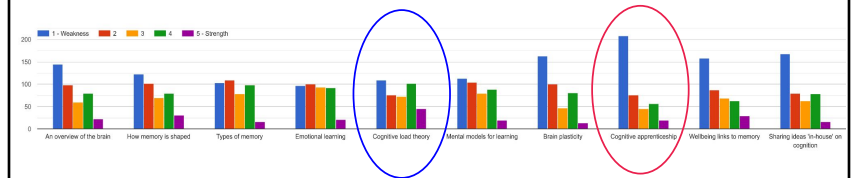
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1. 15,500+ pieces of data
2. 76.3% female
3. 35.2% aged 35-44
4. 23.4% BAME
5. 14% taught 25+ years
6. 84.6% work full time
7. 84.7% live in the UK; 16% based in South East
8. 43% secondary; 19% primary; 3.3% special; 2.8% PRU



Teacher Training + Cognitive Science

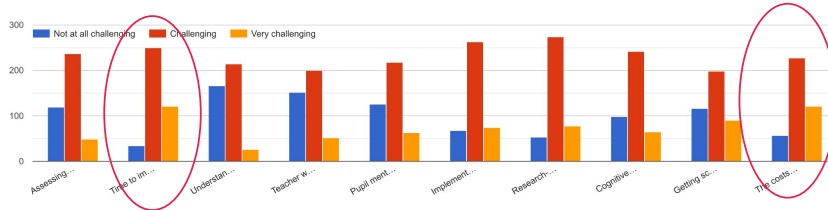
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1. **Weakness?** = cognitive apprenticeship; wellbeing + cognition
2. **Strongest?** = cognitive load theory

Challenges = Access + Using ...

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1. **Very challenging?** = costs, time and availability/access; transfer
2. **Not challenging?** = understanding

Take part?

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The Largest Teacher Database on Working Memory CPD?

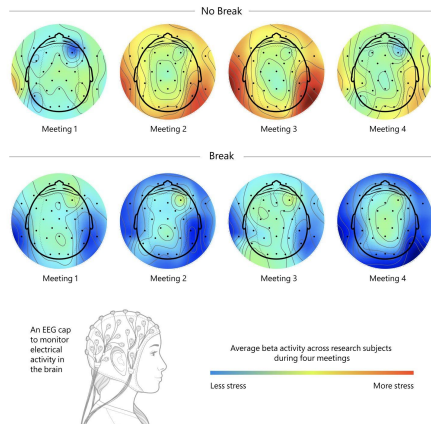


www.TeacherToolkit.co.uk/Working-Memory-CPD

Brain Breaks

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- 14 people across 2 days of meetings
- EEG caps to monitor electrical pulses; electro-encephalo-gram
- Day 1 = x4 back-to-back 30 minutes
- Day 2 = x4 back-to-back 30 minutes meetings with 10 minute breaks
- Back-to-back = **promotes stress**
- Breaks = reduce stress; improve performance.
- Ignore at your peril! I've worked in 25-minute chunks ever since!
- Ref: [Microsoft Labs](#)



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Brain Break



A pause helps retention ...



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1. Retrieval Practice is ...

- a) an assessment strategy 0%
- b) a learning strategy 0%
- c) the first part lesson design 0%



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2. Retrieval Practice research dates back to ...


- a) 1885 0%
- b) 1935 0%
- c) 2005 0%



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3. Effective study suggests teachers should ...


- a) reteach material 0%
- b) retest material 0%
- c) reteach and retest material 0%
- d) reinforce key material 0%



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4. Interleaving practice is ...


- a) Teaching using one topic at a time 0%
- b) Teaching using disconnected topics 0%
- c) Teaching using similar topics 0%



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5. Which of these are the best times to test students' understanding?


- a) Never: testing creates anxiety ... 0%
- b) Before they have learnt it: find out what they already know ... 0%
- c) Shortly after teaching it: force students to retrieve the learning ... 0%
- d) A few weeks after teaching it: build in a delay to allow forgetting. 0%



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6. A person's learning style determines ...

- a) Which part of the brain is used during a learning task 0%
- b) How well students learn in different modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) 0%
- c) Nothing about a student's performance on learning tasks. 0%



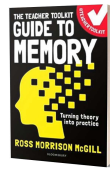
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End of surveys

What, Why, How...

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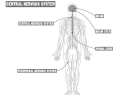
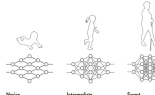


1. A journey with cognitive science
2. To support teachers with/without any formal training
3. Gathering insights; signposting key strategies



[Amzn.to/3y00oq6](https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B083333333)

Guide To Memory

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The Brain <i>An overview + history</i>	How memory changes <i>When neurons connect</i>	Types of memory <i>A beginner's guide</i>	Learning is emotional <i>Hinder or support?</i>	Cognitive load <i>What is it? How to manage ...</i>
1	2	3	4	5
				
Mental models <i>Mnemonics for mental imagery</i>	Brain plasticity <i>How it forms or degrades</i>	Cognitive apprenticeship <i>Moving from novice to expert</i>	Wellbeing + Memory <i>Sleep, diet and exercise</i>	Teacher Training <i>Access, costs and leadership</i>
6	7	8	9	10

Guide To Memory by Ross McGill
Chapter by chapter overview: Turning theory into practice

1: Overview of the Brain
Teachers can become great teachers when they have a deeper understanding of learning. Find ways to understand children's thinking, emotion + motivation to aid teaching practice.

2: How Memory is Shaped?
Neurons send information to other neurons in electrical or chemical form. Approximately 86 billion of them form up to 1 trillion synaptic connections, transmitting information.

3: Types of Memory
Short term memory is your conscious attention in the moment (reading this). Working memory is your ability to manipulate information (decoding this) + long term memory is the ability to store/reuse.

4: Learning is Emotional
We can all experience surprise, happiness, laughter and anger to name but a few emotions. Emotions play an essential role in our lives and in our (sensory) memory e.g. central nervous system.

5: Cognitive Load Theory
A theory that we can process a certain amount of information at one time. If you are new to this theory, this is called intrinsic load. Extraneous load is imposed by unrelated information. For example, how the material is taught and/or relevance to the learning process.


6: Mental Models of Learning
A mental model is a representation of how something works + how we understand the world: to help make sense of a situation, breaking it into manageable chunks.

7: Brain Plasticity
The brain functions are not fixed throughout adulthood; the brain can change its neural pathways, produced and introduced into our central nervous system.

8: Cognitive Apprenticeship
Cognitive apprenticeship requires the student to become the expert by making thinking visible, teaching metacognitive skills + transferring learning to other diverse contexts.

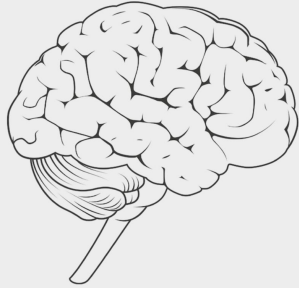
9: Wellbeing + Memory
There are specific things we can do to be happier, live longer + learn better!

10: Teacher CPD
Professional learning requires critique, replication, application, adaptation and amplification, working in 20-30 minute chunks.

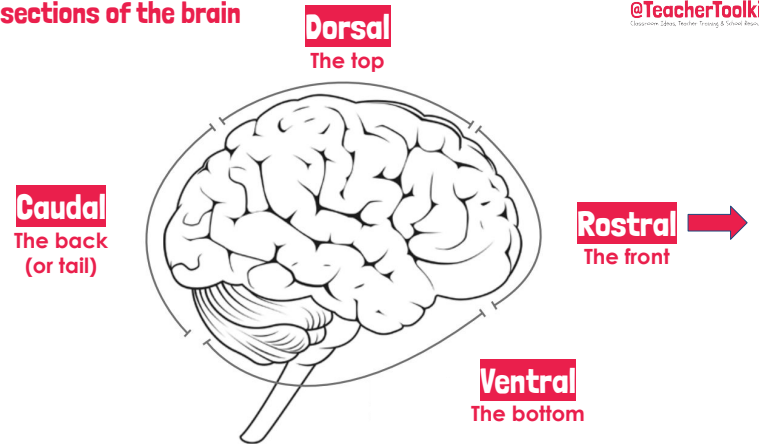



CHAPTER 1

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BRAIN



Main sections of the brain



Five regions of the brain

Cephalon; Greek for kephalē = head.

MESENcephalon =

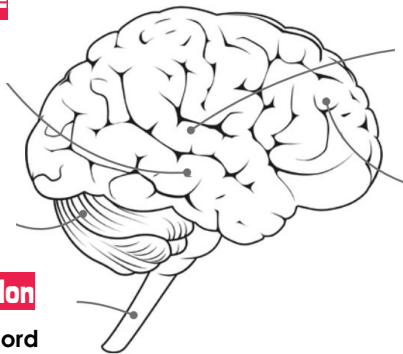
Meso = Middle

METENcephalon

Meta = Beyond

MYELENcephalon

Myelos = Spinal cord



DIENcephalon

Dia = through

TELENcephalon

Tele = far/end

Cerebral Cortex, Cerebellum & Brainstem

Parietal Lobe

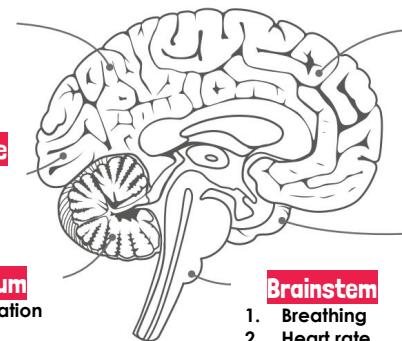
1. Taste
2. Touch
3. Smell
4. Hearing

Occipital Lobe

1. Vision
2. Colour processing

Cerebellum

1. Coordination
2. Balance
3. Attention!



Frontal Lobe

1. Speaking
2. Judgement
3. Memory
4. Thinking
5. Movement

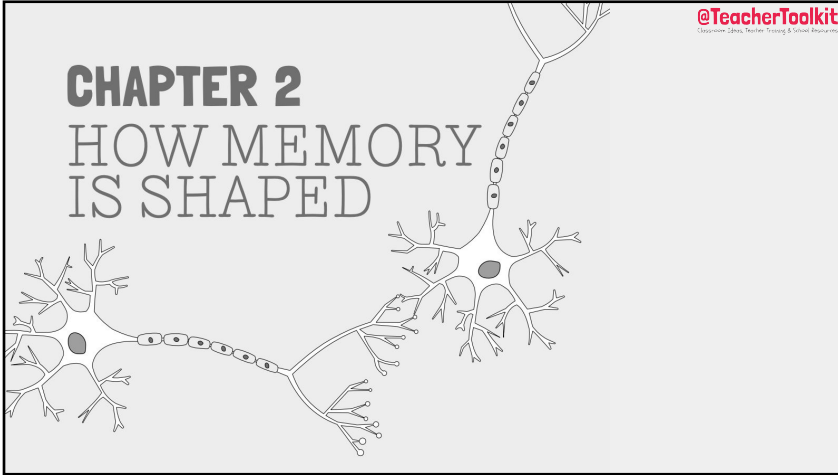
Temporal Lobe

1. Fear
2. Feelings
3. Hearing
4. Behaviour
5. Speech

Brainstem

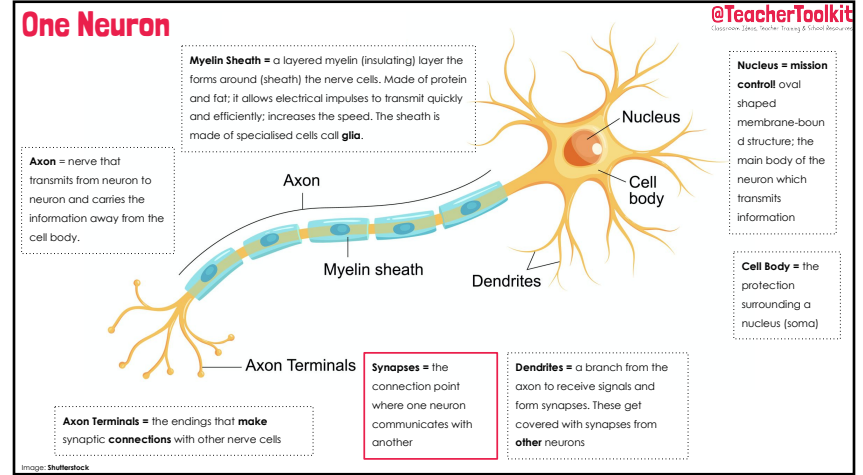
1. Breathing
2. Heart rate
3. Temperature

CHAPTER 2
HOW MEMORY IS SHAPED



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One Neuron



Myelin Sheath = a layered myelin (insulating) layer that forms around (sheath) the nerve cells. Made of protein and fat; it allows electrical impulses to transmit quickly and efficiently; increases the speed. The sheath is made of specialised cells called **glia**.

Axon = nerve that transmits from neuron to neuron and carries the information away from the cell body.

Nucleus = **mission control** oval shaped membrane-bound structure; the main body of the neuron which transmits information

Cell Body = the protection surrounding a nucleus (soma)

Axon Terminals = the endings that make synaptic connections with other nerve cells

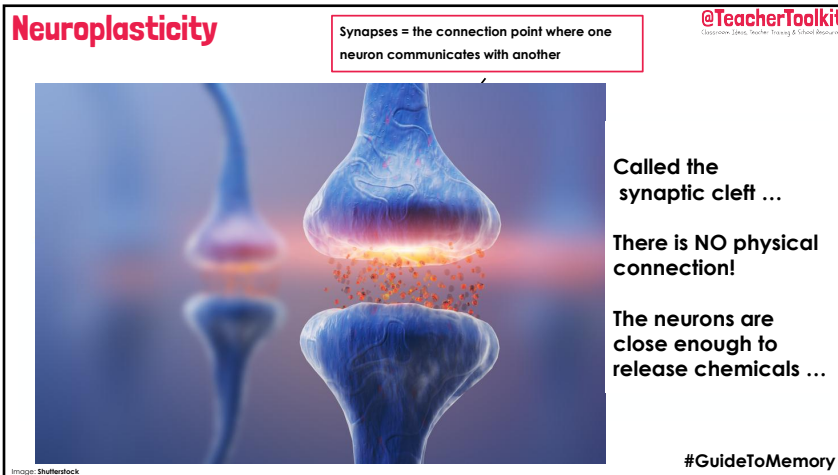
Synapses = the connection point where one neuron communicates with another

Dendrites = a branch from the axon to receive signals and form synapses. These get covered with synapses from other neurons

Image: Shutterstock

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Neuroplasticity



Synapses = the connection point where one neuron communicates with another

Called the **synaptic cleft** ...

There is **NO** physical connection!

The neurons are close enough to release chemicals ...

#GuideToMemory

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Have YOU been listening?



QUIZ TIME



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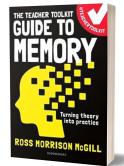
Time for a test!

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Quiz time!

1. Scan the QR
2. Get ready to take part
3. 15 seconds per question
4. 9 questions ...



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Brain Break



A pause helps retention ...

CHAPTER 3

AN INTRODUCTION
TO TYPES OF
MEMORY

scu bap
dee bap bee
boo do

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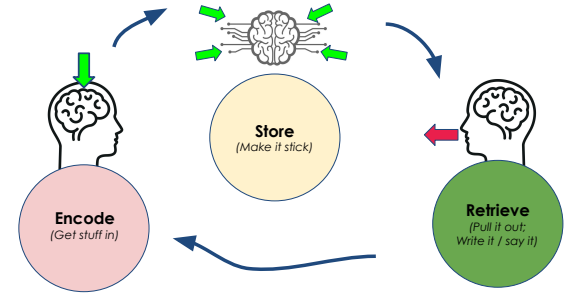
1. Can you see learning happen?
2. How does learning happen?



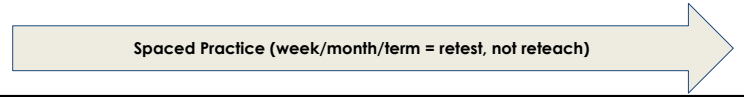


Beginners' Guide To Learning

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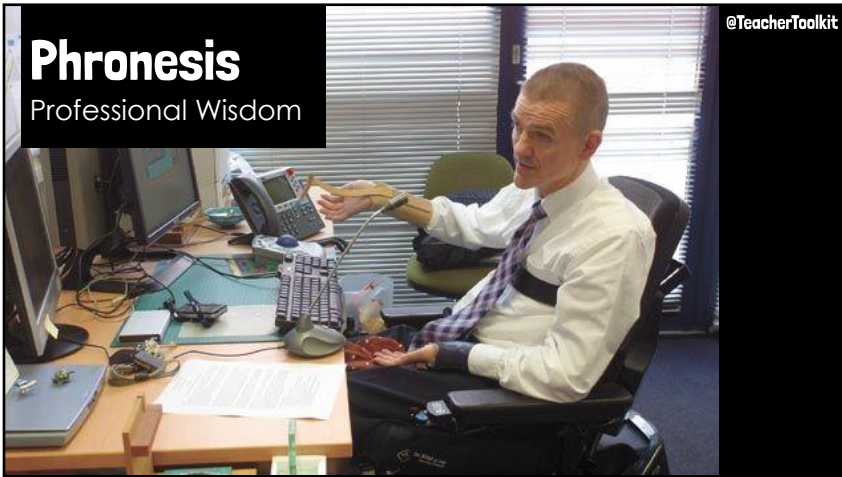
Spaced Practice (week/month/term = retest, not reteach)



Phronesis

Professional Wisdom

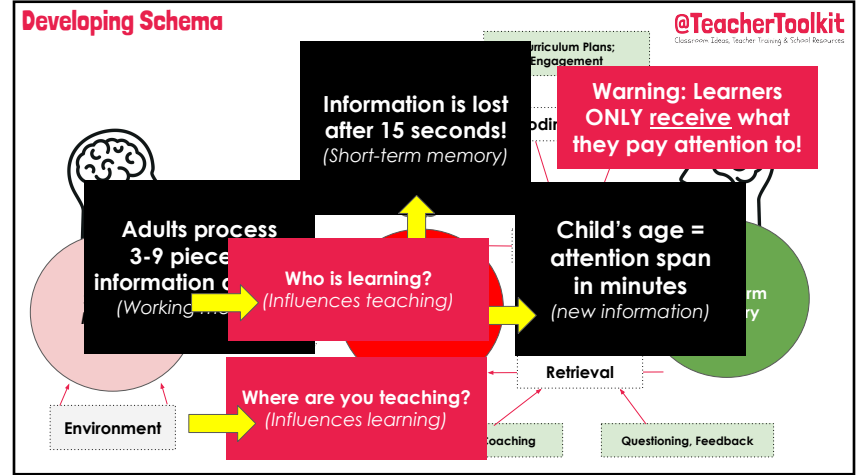
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Schema Construction

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When do you start teaching students HOW to learn?



A pause helps retention ...

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Brain Break



A pause helps retention ...

60-Second Retrieval Resource

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Last Month

Knowledge covered ...



Last Week

Common threads ...

Today

Clarify misconceptions; key questions ...



Last Lesson

Connected schema ...



How would you use this?



A pause helps retention ...



Memory in 30 seconds

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1. The closet is a good metaphor; memory is reconstructive
2. But the 'wardrobe needs to be tidied' = easier to find
3. Hang up a shirt = Recall makes it easier to remember

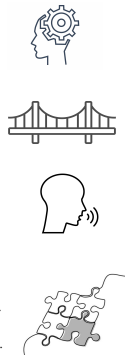


Definitions Page

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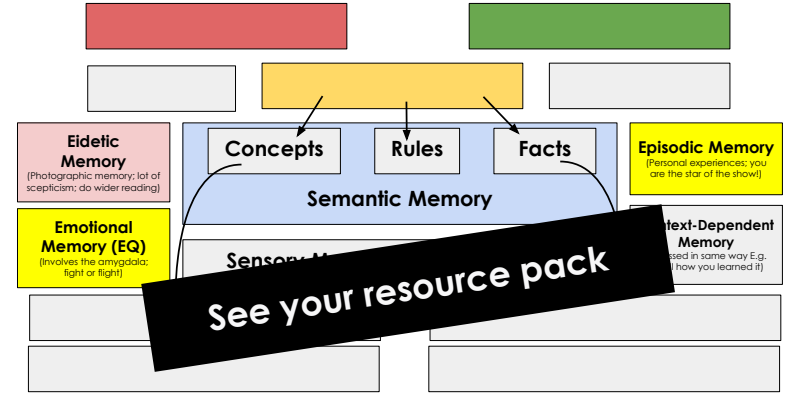
1. Short Term Memory =
2. Working Memory =
3. Long-Term Memory =
4. Intrinsic Load =
5. Extraneous
6. Retrieval Pr
7. Spaced/Distributed Practice =
8. Interleaving Practice =
9. Dual Coding =
10. Concrete Examples =

See your resource pack



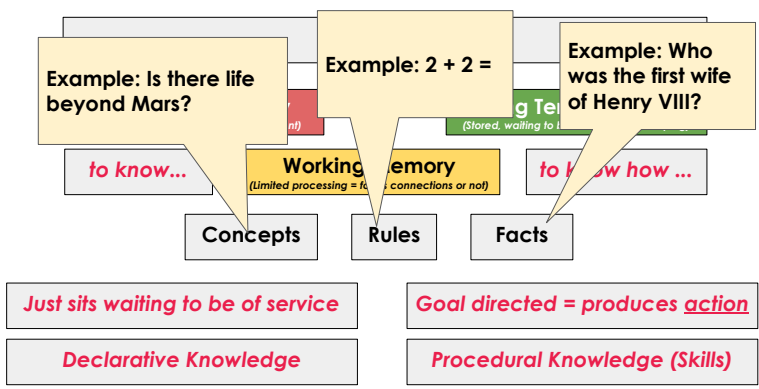
Types of Memory

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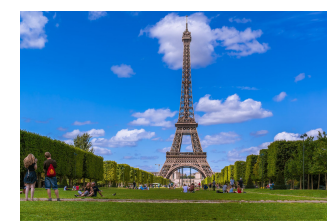
Explainer – Practical Idea – Worked Example – Template

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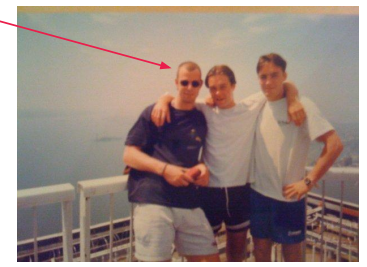


Semantic or Episodic Memory

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Semantic:
General knowledge about NYC
Can be recalled at anytime



Episodic:
Related to an (episode in your life) event
Connected to a time and place
Fades and is not reliable...





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Brain Break



A pause helps retention ...

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Ideas To Help You

Key resources to get started ...



Direct Instruction (MINT)

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1. **M** = Materials
2. **I** = In/out of seats
3. **N** = Noise level
4. **T** = Time



Image: Shutterstock

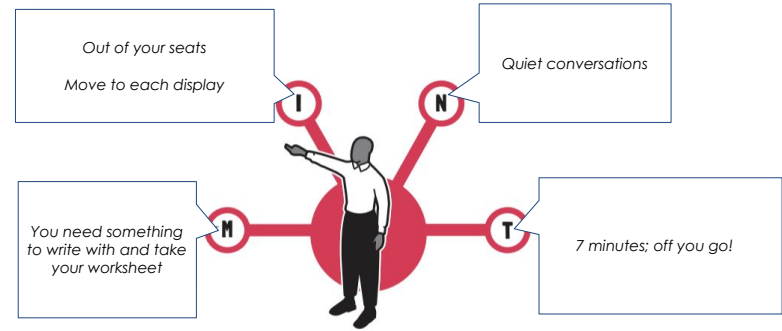
Instruction Script

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Direct Instruction

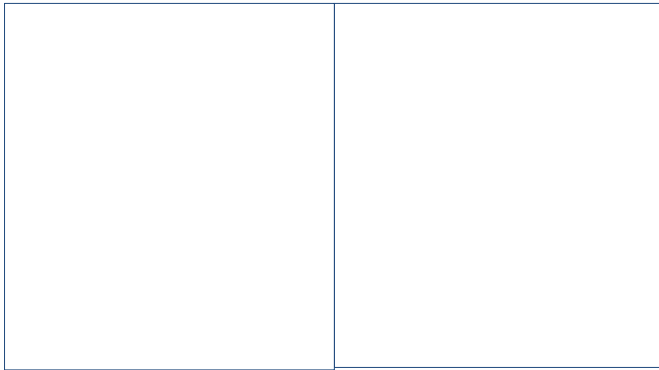
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Redundancy Effect

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<https://www.instagram.com/teacherstoolkit/>



Bears **enjoy** eating honey.



Bears **enjoy** eating honey.



Dual Coding



Without Dual Coding

With Dual Coding

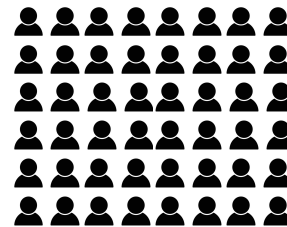
Why are volcanoes dangerous?

Why are volcanoes dangerous?

Cognition + Perception

Novice

Slide from 2013



Expert

Slide from 2021



Modelling Mantra

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1. I Do
2. We Do
3. You Do.



$$7 \times ? = 28$$

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How do you consciously use
non-verbal signals?

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A pause helps retention ...

Brain Break

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A pause helps retention ...

Small tweaks...

Design Technology KS3 Scheme of work -				
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Why? Introduction to Design Technology and the role of the designer.	Why? Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.	Why? Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.	Why? Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.	Why? Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.
What? Introduction to Design Technology and the role of the designer.	What? Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.	What? Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.	What? Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.	What? Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.
How? Introduction to Design Technology and the role of the designer.	How? Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.	How? Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.	How? Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.	How? Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.
Resources Introduction to Design Technology and the role of the designer.	Resources Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.	Resources Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.	Resources Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.	Resources Understanding the role of the designer and the importance of safety.

Before

Lesson Overview	Encoding	Storage	Retrieval	Resources
Week 1	Activity B 20- Recognise hazards and risks.	Physical demonstration of oom hazards and machines to be used in SW.		Workshop materials Pen and ink
Week 2	Activity A 20- Identify a variety of information in ICT.		Quiz 8 - H&S hazards.	Prepared spelling quiz
Week 3		Develop design criteria using brief to guide thinking and decision.		Class study
Week 4		Introduce proposals to match specification criteria.	Quiz 8 - Sources	Differentiated worksheet
Week 5		Provide worksheet exercises to influence choices and decisions; conflicts or interest.		Range of children's toys
Week 6	Activity C Outline plans using AEC.			Modeling outline
Week 7				

After

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Timetable Design

Year 7	Term 1										
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	
Topic	Ergonomics					Structures					
Date (w/b)	Spaced practice										
Assessment	Knowledge Organiser					Knowledge Organiser		Ergonomics			
Resources	Chairs	Tables	Stools			Bridges	Buildings	Wires	Fencing	Shells	Arches
Knowledge + Skills	Interleaved practice										
Interleaved Materials		Structures									
Retrieval/ Spaced						Ergonomics			Ergonomics		

1. Build activation & storage strength
2. Reduce stress; increase success rate
3. Teach HOW to understand learning.



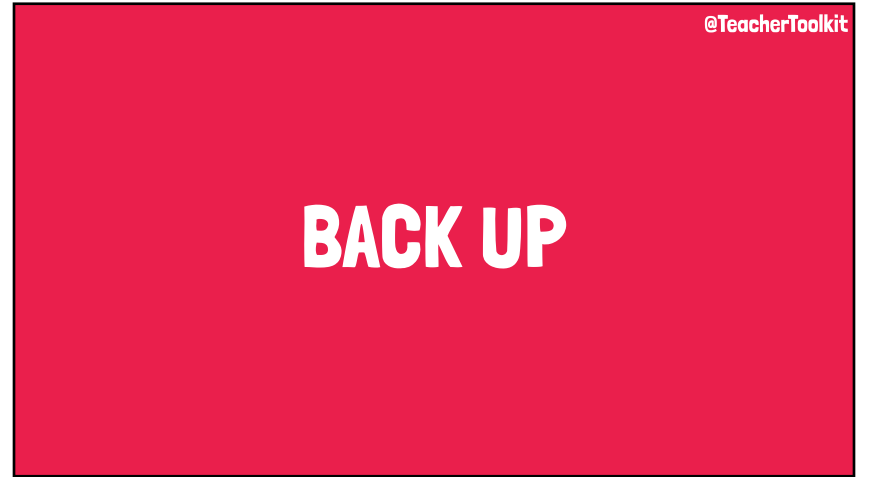
Neurotypical recommendations ...

The WHY



Most people can drive a car ...

I lead teacher CPD anywhere - please ask



9 Effective Learning Techniques

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Elaboration <i>Being able to explain why</i>	Self Explanation <i>Explain new information</i>	Summarisation <i>Bitesize overview</i>	Highlighting <i>Whilst reading</i>	
1	2	3	4	
Mnemonics <i>Keywords for mental imagery</i>	Dual Coding <i>Mental imagery of text</i>	Rereading <i>Re-study material</i>	Retrieval Practice <i>Low stakes assessment</i>	Spaced + Interleaving <i>Scheduled and interwoven</i>
5	6	7	8	9

Inspired by [ConnectTheDots](#) (Taylor, 2019)

9 Effective Learning Techniques

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	Technique	Efficacy/Impact	What is it?
1	Retrieval Practice	High	Low stakes quizzing; desirable difficulty
2	Spaced + Interleaving	High	Presenting scheduled and mixed content over time
3	Elaboration	Medium	Generating and being able to explain why
4	Self-Explanation	Low	Explaining new information
5	Summarisation	Low	Bitesize overview
6	Highlighting	Low	Marking potentially important information whilst reading
7	Keyword mnemonics	Low	Keywords for mental models/imagery
8	Imagery for Text	Low	Mental imagery for text (dual coding); pair text with images
9	Rereading	Low	Restudying text material

All these strategies have an impact on learning. N.b. Spaced + Interleaving have been amalgamated for this resource; they are separate strategies and interleaving is sometimes known as 'distributed practice'.

Inspired by (Table 1: Learning Techniques) [10.1177/1529100612453266](#) (Dunlosky et al (2013))

9 Study Skills, Month by Month

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Month	September	October
Technique What it's for	Highlighting Highlighting important text which is relevant	Highlighting Highlighting important text which is relevant
<p>Designed to be used as a guide for teachers, parents and tutors to be introduced to each technique month by month to support retention, study skills and forward end of year assessment. Each technique should be re-positioned according to the curriculum and timeframe being used.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Introduce one new technique each month</p>		
Space/ Interleaving Involving your content which is already learnt	Space/ Interleaving Involving your content which is already learnt	
Retrieval Practice Use retrieval questions which is already learnt	Retrieval Practice Use retrieval questions which is already learnt	



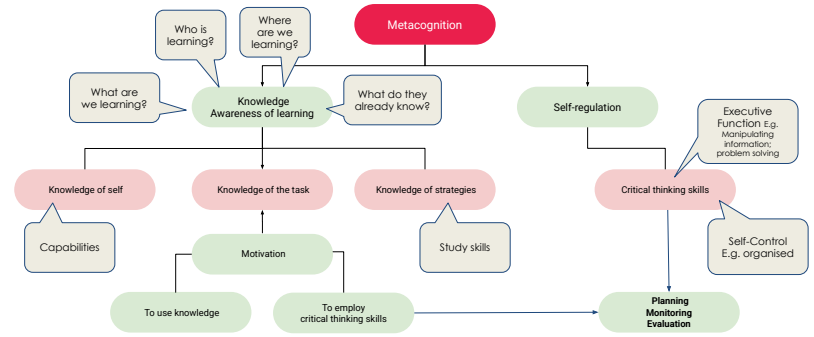
April	May	June
Highlighting Highlighting important text which is relevant	Highlighting Highlighting important text which is relevant	Highlighting Highlighting important text which is relevant
Summarisation A short overview of what has been learnt	Summarisation A short overview of what has been learnt	Summarisation A short overview of what has been learnt
Self Explanation Explaining your own understanding	Self Explanation Explaining your own understanding	Self Explanation Explaining your own understanding
Elaboration Adding more detail to your understanding	Elaboration Adding more detail to your understanding	Elaboration Adding more detail to your understanding
Mnemonics Using memory devices to help recall	Mnemonics Using memory devices to help recall	Mnemonics Using memory devices to help recall
Imagery for text Using images to help recall	Imagery for text Using images to help recall	Imagery for text Using images to help recall
Reading Using reading strategies to help recall	Reading Using reading strategies to help recall	Reading Using reading strategies to help recall
Interleaving Involving your content which is already learnt	Space/ Interleaving Involving your content which is already learnt	Space/ Interleaving Involving your content which is already learnt
Retrieval Practice Use retrieval questions which is already learnt	Retrieval Practice Use retrieval questions which is already learnt	Retrieval Practice Use retrieval questions which is already learnt

771529100612453266 (Dunlosky et al [2013])

The Components of Metacognition

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A simplification of complex process

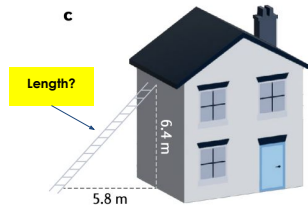
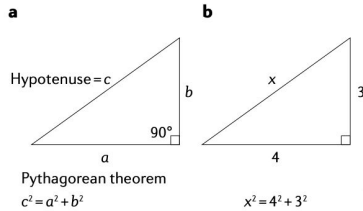


Inspired by How to Create Autonomous Learners (Morr, 2023)

Cognitive Apprenticeship + Metacognition

(self-regulation, not thinking about thinking)

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Knowledge retention = the ability to retain

A) Retain the theorem = in a right-angled triangle the length of the hypotenuse squared is equal to the combined squares of the lengths of the other two sides

Knowledge transfer = the ability to use knowledge in a unknown problem

B) When knowledge is applied in a new context that differs from the way in which it was originally learned

Transfer requires memory retention. Remember the theory, then use somewhere else.

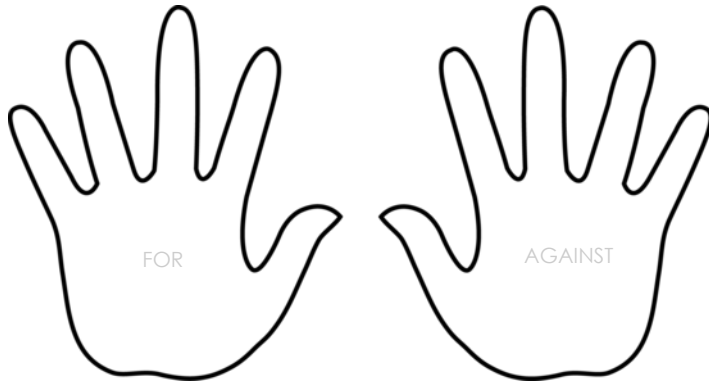
Brain Dump Example

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1. The question or task is...
2. What I know...
3. What I didn't know...
4. What I need to find out next time?

Retrieval Hands

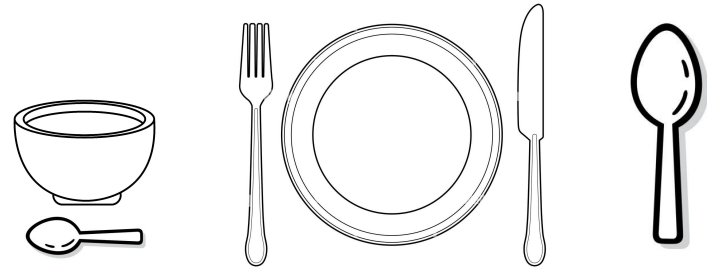
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Instructions: Write two-sided question (for & against) on each hand; 5 facts each

Retrieval Dinner

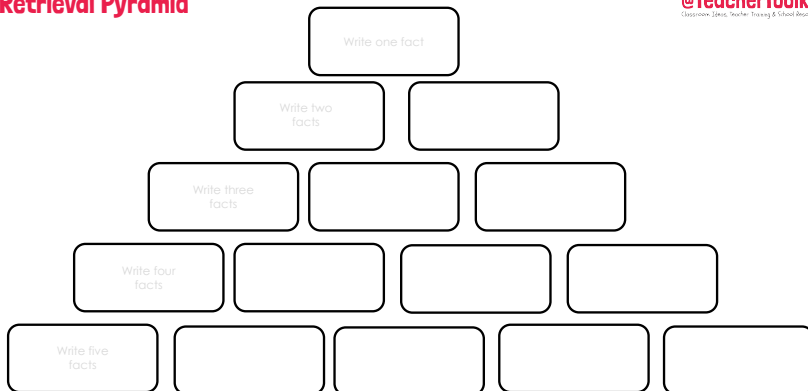
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Instructions: Write one fact in the soup bowl; more details on the dinner plate. One exciting fact on the dessert spoon!

Retrieval Pyramid

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Instructions: Write the answers to the questions. One fact, two facts, three facts etc.

Fix The Error

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Spot one error

Mount Vesuvius is the only active volcano on mainland Europe and is most famous for its catastrophic eruption in AD 79, which buried the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum under layers of volcanic ash and pumice. Interestingly, Vesuvius has been dormant since its last eruption in **1994**.

Spot all the errors

Mount Vesuvius is one of **three** active volcanoes on mainland Europe and is most famous for its catastrophic eruption in **1305**, which buried the **12 people** under layers of volcanic ash and pumice. Interestingly, Vesuvius has been **active** since its last eruption in **1994**.






Redraft

Correct example: Mount Vesuvius is the only active volcano on mainland Europe and is most famous for its catastrophic eruption in AD 79, which buried the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum under layers of volcanic ash and pumice.

Write your version on this row



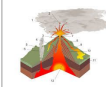


Instructions: Correct each statement in the grid

Cops, Robbers & Teachers

	 1. What do you know? <small>Facts you already know</small>	 2. What did you forget? <small>Facts you have had to use from a friend</small>	 3. Expert knowledge <small>Connecting the facts you knew with information you gathered from someone else</small>
			
			

Instructions: Using the analogy of cops and robbers, write down things you know; write down things you found from someone else

Dual Coding Retrieval

	Today	Last lesson	Last week	Last month	Last term	Last year
Image						
Write one fact						
Write a paragraph						
Label the diagram						

Instructions: Use the images to remember the main points

Dual Coding Example

	Today	Last lesson	Last week	Last month	Last term	Last year
Image						
Write one fact	<i>The purpose of the Earth's crust is ...</i>	<i>Eyjafjallajökull erupted in 2010</i>	<i>Watch the video and explain how lava, ash, and gases are released during eruptions</i>	<i>Magma rises through a vent</i>	<i>Kilimanjaro is a dormant volcano in Tanzania</i>	<i>Volcanoes form where tectonic plates interact</i>
Write a paragraph	<i>Volcanoes are formed ... Across Europe, there are ...</i>	<i>Describe the impact the 2010 eruption had on aviation travel</i>	<i>Explain what happens during an eruption</i>	<i>Explain the journey of magma to the Earth's surface</i>	<i>Compare dormant and active volcanoes</i>	<i>Explain why volcanoes occur in some places but not others</i>
Label the diagram	<i>Are these parts labelled correctly?</i>	<i>Where is Iceland on the world map?</i>	<i>Provide an eruption sequence diagram for students to place in the correct order</i>	<i>Magma chamber, vent, crater, ash cloud</i>	<i>African rift valley map</i>	<i>Plate boundary diagram</i>

The Teacher Toolkit Guide to the Science of Learning (McGill, 2024)

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